

# Steal This Hook! Unusual Jobs

*By Doug Beyer*



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Welcome again to Steal This Hook! Today's theme is *unusual jobs*. The PCs aren't your run-of-the-mill adventurers, but then these aren't your typical hero-requiring assignments, either. The PCs can tell tales about these jobs over an ale or two at the adventurer hangouts since the assignments start out as typical errands for a rich patron but end so outlandishly that they can take even seasoned adventurers by surprise. Steal these hooks for some **Eberron** adventures outside the ordinary.

## Half the Man

The PCs meet with a possible employer who has a "retrieval" mission for them. You can read aloud or paraphrase the following text:

"Thank you for meeting with me. I represent a wealthy entrepreneur who seeks recovery of a lost item. My client was exploring in the Vile Marsh area of the Shadow Marches when a creature known as a bulette surprised him and made off with the item in question. Your job is to hunt the creature and to recover the item. My client will pay handsomely for its return. Any questions?"

At this point, the PCs will probably ask about the item and other details. Use the following information to carry on the conversation:

"The item? The item to be recovered is my client's lower body. The bulette's bite severed him at the waist. The legs and pelvis should still be intact in its second stomach by now, but of course time is of the essence. Identifying characteristics for the item include the hair and muscle patterns of an adult male shifter, a curving scar on the left thigh, and a pair of dinosaur-leather riding boots with silver buckles. Should the boots be returned as well, you may expect an extra reward. Shall we discuss terms?"

If the PCs ask more questions, they receive nothing more than responses that time is of the essence and that other details concerning the client are not relevant to the task at hand.

## The Faceless Twenty-Five

Heroes are used to intrigue: Most likely they've wined and dined the crime bosses, danced with royalty at the masquerade balls, started those insidious rumors about dragonmark heirs, and discovered the truth about the schemes of countless lordlings. But this time it's intrigue in another theater entirely: Mrs. Pettiwon's second grade class -- of changelings.

Feb Darrum, a changeling tradesman in Sharn's Northedge district and proud single father of one, hires the PCs to investigate his daughter. Feb's daughter Rak is one of the seven-year-olds who have barricaded themselves inside a classroom of the Northedge School for Changelings. No one is sure yet how they sealed off the exits,

but through the window above the main door one can see that the children have all swapped identities and somehow deactivated the *gems of true seeing* in the classroom. It's the sixth hour of the stalemate and the children have begun making strange demands: They want an unarmed adult unaffiliated with the school to become their liaison for further negotiations.

What's going on? Is this a childish prank or something more serious? Did the children stage this revolt on their own, or are they being manipulated -- or held hostage -- by a rakshasa posing as a teacher? Can the PCs infiltrate the classroom, discover which one is Feb's daughter, and learn the truth? Will the PCs live to regret having said yes to this job, after trying to get a straight answer out of changeling seven-year-olds?

## Dungeon Blueprints

The letter, *arcane marked* with the sigil of Paelto, a wealthy old sorcerer-explorer, describes a vast dungeon riddled with the cleverest of traps, secret shifting walls, and puzzle-rooms. It shows areas guarded by the darkest of subterranean monsters, living spells, and undead. But during dinner at the Paelto's multitowered castle, he explains that the PCs are not meant to *solve* the dungeon, but to *design* it! Or, at least, they should oversee its design and offer their consultancy during the construction process. Paelto has a team of architects, engineers, and magewrights already building the sorcerer's dream dungeon. But a series of construction mishaps -- a badly configured *exploding rune*, an ahead-of-schedule release of ripe carcass crab eggs, a murdered construction foreman, and an unplanned chamber filled with the trappings of Xoriat summoning rituals -- threatens the ambitious two-year completion schedule. Paelto is excited to hear the well-traveled heroes' ideas -- and he may need their help to explore this possibly *more* dangerous half-finished dungeon.

## The Evil Masterkid

The heroes are doing some hard time -- perhaps in a Thranish jail, or as part of a Blackscale chain gang in Q'barra -- after a bit of [scofflaw heroics](#). The authorities are about to move and separate them when a mysterious patron buys up the PCs' contracts. A House Orien coach picks them up and delivers them to their new master: Banni, a thirteen-year-old human boy -- and by the looks of those eight rings on his fingers, a Silver Concordian of the Aurum. The heroes are lucky to be out of the slammer, but they aren't free; Banni intends to "allow" them to earn back the price he paid for them with a series of odd and dangerous jobs -- and to treat them like dirt in the meantime.

Banni, the heir to a guildmaster's fortune, is a spoiled brat. However, his rather naïve secret plan, only half understood even by himself, is to resurrect his father who died a year ago and to *give back* the responsibilities that were so suddenly thrust upon him. Since his father's spirit is lost somewhere in timeless Dolurrrh, the only thing short of a *wish* or *miracle* that will return him is a special ritual during a triple lunar eclipse, involving the trading of five souls for the one returning. . . . Will the PCs clear their obligation to Banni and still keep their mortal souls? Have shadowy forces within the Aurum taken advantage of Banni's inherited position to trick him into creating a portal to Dolurrrh? Can Banni redeem his bratty behavior and save his father?

## Let No Man Put Asunder

When the young noble Unthark d'Vadalis, son of the head of House Vadalis, announces his marital engagement to the legendary Droaam hag Sora Katra, all of Khorvaire gasps collectively -- and the PCs receive an urgent note via expeditious messenger soon after. Unthark's father Dalin d'Vadalis hires them to be both wedding planners and spies for this most political and unholy of matrimonies; he needs evidence that the crafty [Daughter](#)

[of Sora Kell](#) has thrown an enchantment over his son somehow -- and if all else fails, he needs a good florist, a decorator in the Eldeen Reaches, and somebody who can play the harp.

This situation is extremely prickly -- it requires tact, subterfuge, and resourcefulness on the part of the heroes. For political reasons, Patriarch Dalin cannot seem as if he is trying to stop the marriage; in fact, he may have to work against the heroes a bit, encouraging the union to show his love for his son. However, given the Daughters' ascendant power in Droaam, in his darker moments, Dalin may actually muse what the marriage could mean for House Vadalis; the Ashbound druids have been a thorn in his side in the Reaches for some time.

## Mini-Hooks

- A well-spoken goblin botanist seeks stalwart gardeners to tend his garden full of monstrous plants.
- A dying mind flayer is the only witness who saw what happened to a missing duke of Zilargo; the heroes' job is to keep the flayer alive until the case is solved.
- The PCs are hired to transport an unmarked package from Karnath to Aundair, but due to a disastrous overland mail error, the heroes are given hatching wyvern eggs to deliver instead of legal documents.
- A lich hires the PCs as consultants to launch her public relations campaign.
- An elder exorcist of the Silver Flame, psychically scarred from all the evil he has seen, seeks adventurers for a quest to locate the "quietest, most normal town" in Khorvaire.
- A warforged ranger wants to find the largest animal companion in Darguun that he can handle (3 HD).

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## About the Author

Doug Beyer spent a lot of time getting philosophy degrees until he figured out that he should just move to Seattle and become a web developer for Wizards of the Coast. Now he spends his days working on games and his evenings playing them. Doug uses the time normally allotted for sleeping to lurk on the Wizards.com message boards as his alter ego, WotC\_Doog.

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